



SENATE
MAJORITY LEADER

KEN SIKKEMA

NEWS RELEASE

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Granholtz wants SBT replacement; Sikkema wants school employee health insurance reform

Lansing – Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema today called on Gov. Granholtz to support school employee health insurance reform during the Legislature’s lame duck session to help prevent a reduction in per-pupil funding next year. Sikkema’s comments came after the governor called upon the Legislature to pass a replacement for the Single Business Tax during lame duck.

Sikkema also said he expects to see a legislative Democrat introduce bills next Tuesday pertaining to the governor’s Single Business Tax replacement. Sen. Nancy Cassis, chairperson of the Senate Finance Committee, is scheduling a meeting for next Wednesday and inviting state Treasurer Robert Kleine to testify on the governor’s proposal.

“I’ve said time and again that we have many important things that need to be finished before the end of the year because they are positive for Michigan and could help with the economic problems we are experiencing,” said Sikkema, R-Wyoming. “I welcome the governor back to the discussion on the SBT, but she needs to come to the table with support for teacher health insurance reform so we aren’t forced to cut school funding.”

The Senate Fiscal Agency recently reported an expected deficit of more than \$280 million in the School Aid Fund that will result in a pro-rata reduction of approximately \$166 per pupil if action isn’t taken.

Senate Bills 895-898 would save schools an estimated \$573 million during the first three years by allowing competitive bidding on the same excellent benefits school employees currently enjoy. The bills passed the Senate nearly a year ago but have languished in the House due to opposition by Michigan’s largest teacher’s union and lack of support from the governor.

“The governor is making demands for what she wants done, but she’s not the only one in town with ideas to help Michigan,” Sikkema said. “I’m more than willing to have a busy December, but the fuel needed to move Michigan forward is provided by compromise, not drawing lines in the sand.”

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